

## MEETING REPORT NO. 30

PROJECT: **Town of Needham Downtown Study**  
Needham, MA

DATE: 13 May 2008

LOCATION: Selectmen's Meeting Room  
Town Hall

PRESENT:	Downtown Study Committee (DSC)	Jack Cogswell Jerry Wasserman Bob Smart Moe Handel Lee Newman Alexandra Clee Joyce Moss Mark Gluesing Jeanne McKnight Paul Good Bob Hentschel John Edgar Martin Batt John McQuillan Kate Fitzpatrick Peter Friedenberg
	Needham Police Department	Chief Tom Leary
	Needham Department of Public Works	Tony Del Gaizo Rick Merson
	Community Opportunities Group	Judi Barrett
	DiNisco Design Partnership (DDP)	Kenneth DiNisco Jon Oxman

## 1. PURPOSE

1.1. The purpose of this meeting was to continue discussion on the proposed zoning for the study area.

## 2. THE IMPACT OF PROPOSED ZONING ON BUILDING SIZE

2.1. DiNisco Design presented alternative development scenarios prepared in response to the question raised regarding maximum FAR requirements. At the last DSC meeting some DSC members said the proposed maximum FAR requirements do not allow for large enough buildings. See the attached memo with alternative development scenarios and summary.

- 2.2. Based on the evaluation of the alternative development scenarios, DDP suggested alternative maximum FARs in the Needham Center Overlay sub-districts:

- Needham Center Overlay Sub-District A – Increase the proposed Maximum FAR from 1.5 to 2.0.
- Needham Center Overlay Sub-District B – Increase the proposed Maximum FAR from 1.2 to 1.5.

The proposed maximum FAR requirements for the rest of the study area were recommended to remain as proposed.

- 2.3. The DSC pointed out that the following criteria would also control the size of a project:

- Parking – As shown in the alternative development scenarios most projects would require a waiver to reduce minimum parking requirements by payment of a fee to the parking fund.
- Traffic – As part of the special permit process, the applicant would have to show no adverse impact to traffic.
- Fire Lane Access & Drainage – Site design requirements for safety vehicle access and stormwater drainage also impact the building size.

- 2.4. Jeanne McKnight pointed out that existing zoning allows for any lots, with a FAR in existence on 01/01/90 that is higher than that allowed by zoning, to retain the higher maximum FAR.

- 2.5. The majority of the DSC agreed that higher FAR maximums should be allowed in the Needham Center Overlay District to allow for the type of development that is an articulated goal by the DSC for the downtown. Some DSC members advocated the elimination of the FAR requirement completely because it is a redundant requirement.

- 2.6. Bob Smart made a motion to revise the maximum FAR requirements as follows:

- Needham Center Overlay Sub-District A – Maximum FAR of 2.0 by right (with the project meeting special permit criteria) and up to 3.0 by waiver.
- Needham Center Overlay Sub-District B – Maximum FAR of 1.5 by right (with the project meeting special permit criteria) and up to 2.5 by waiver.

The DSC voted to approve the motion, 7 for and 2 against. The 2 members voting against the motion supported the complete elimination of FAR requirements.

- 2.7. Judi Barrett will prepare a summary chart comparing existing zoning to proposed zoning that will be distributed to DSC members in advance of the next meeting.

### 3. PROJECTING SIGNS

- 3.1. Ken DiNisco asked the DSC to respond to Paul Good's proposal to revise the Town By-Law to promote the use of projecting signs.

- 3.2. The DSC agreed that projecting signs should be promoted but that the Proposed Signage By-Law should be presented separately to Town Meeting.

---

#### 4. TRAFFIC & PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1. Excerpts for Eaton Square and Memorial Park from the Traffic & Circulation Recommendations Plan were handed out showing the additional opportunities for improvements at these two locations as shown at the previous DSC meeting and the revised recommendations to be included in the public plan as directed by the DSC at that same meeting.

#### 5. NEXT MEETINGS

- 5.1. The next meeting of the Downtown Study Committee is scheduled for 7:00 PM on Wednesday 28 May 2008, location TBD. The purpose of this meeting will be to conclude the review of proposed zoning and design guidelines. Additional design guidelines materials handed out at this meeting are attached to the report.
- 5.2. A Community Workshop will be scheduled in Mid-June, date and location TBD.

---

The discussions of this meeting are recorded as understood by the writer. Please advise the writer of any omissions or corrections.



---

Jon Oxman AIA  
DiNISCO DESIGN

JAO/

cc: DSC  
Judi Barrett  
Kenneth DiNisco  
Richard Rice

Enclosures: Memo: Review of the Impact of Proposed Zoning on Building Size (05/13/08)  
• Summary of Alternative Development Scenarios  
• Alternative Development Scenarios 1A – 4C

Drawings: Design Guidelines:  
• Traffic & Pedestrian Circulation Guidelines (05/09/08)  
• Streetscape Recommendations (05/13/08)  
• Sidewalk Dimensional Guidelines (05/13/08)

Traffic & Pedestrian Circulation Recommendations (05/13/08)  
• Memorial Park – Opportunities for Improvements  
• Memorial Park – As Shown in Public Plan  
• Eaton Square – Opportunities for Improvements  
• Eaton Square – As Shown in Public Plan